

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 01497 130458Z
ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 1497

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y TEXT PARA ONE

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR UNGER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, TW
SUBJECT: FURTHER ACTION ON INDOCHINA REFUGEES

REF: STATE 049743 (NOTAL)

1. I CALLED ON PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO MARCH 10 AND TOLD HIM THAT I HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DISCUSS WITH HIM THE QUESTION OF RESETTLEMENT HERE IN THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA OF SEVERAL THOUSAND REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA. I REMINDED HIM I HAD MENTIONED THE SUBJECT TO HIM EARLY IN JANUARY FOLLOWING THE HONG KONG CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE AND THAT I HAD RAISED THE MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SHEN TWICE: ON JANUARY 30 AND MOST RECENTLY ON FEBRUARY 20 WHEN MR. CASEY OF IRC VISITED TAIPEI.

2. DRAWING ON PARA 2-5 REFTTEL. I EMPHASIZED THE CONCERN IN THE CONGRESS, AS WELL AS IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, OF WHAT WE REGARD AS INADEQUATE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE CONTINUING FLOW OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. AFTER SUMMARIZING THE HONG KONG CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE AND THAT I HAD RAISED THE MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SHEN TWICE: ON JANUARY 30 AND MOST RECENTLY ON FEBRUARY 20 WHEN MR. CASEY OF IRC VISITED TAIPEI.
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ING WHAT THE UNITED STATES HAS DONE SINCE APRIL 1975, I CONCLUDED THAT SINCE SO MANY OF THE REFUGEES UNDER DISCUSSION ARE ETHNICALLY CHINESE, THE QUESTION HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN RAISED AS TO WHY THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA IS RELUCTANT TO TAKE SOME SIGNIFICANT PART IN THIS RESETTLEMENT EFFORT, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE BOAT CASES. I ADDED THAT

WE LOOKED FORWARD TO AN EARLY AND FAVORABLE RESPONSE.

3. THE PREMIER HAD OBVIOUSLY DISCUSSED THE ISSUE IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL WITH HIS ADVISERS AND WAS WELL BRIEFED; NEVERTHELESS, HE SEEMED SURPRISED AT THE LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES INVOLVED AND THAT THE FLOW WAS CONTINUING. HE BEGAN HIS RESPONSE BY SAYING THAT THE GROC HAD DECIDED THAT IT WOULD TRY ITS UTMOST TO RENDER ASSISTANCE TO INDO-CHINA REFUGEES TO COME TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. THIS HAD BEEN THE ROC'S POLICY EARLIER, HE SAID, BUT HAD BEEN SUSPENDED FOR A PERIOD BECAUSE OF CONCERN HERE THAT VIETNAM, BEING COMMUNIST, MIGHT USE THE FLOW OF REFUGGES AS A MEANS OF INFILTRATING AGENTS INTO TAIWAN. HE THEN OUTLINED THREE STEPS THAT THE GROC WAS PREPARED TO TAKE AS ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE EFFORT TO ASSIST REFUGEES.

A. THE GROC WILL GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE RESETTLEMENT OF 500 REFUGEES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.

B. SECONDLY, THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA WILL PERMIT ALL THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED AN ROC ENTRY VISA (PRESUMABLY OVERSEAS CHINESE HOLDING ROC PASSPORTS) TO COME TO TAIWAN FOR RESETTLEMENT.

C. FINALLY, THE ROC OVERSEAS CHINESE COMMISSION, ASSISTED BY THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO SET UP A BOAT CASE REPROCESSING CENTER ON A FORMER PRISON ISLAND OFF THE SOUTHWEST COAST OF TAIWAN NEAR KAOHSIUNG.

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4. COMMENTING ON THE PREMIER'S SUMMARY, I REPEATED THE POINT I HAD ALREADY MADE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT, SINCEPYHESE REFUGEES WERE CLEARLY RISKING THEIR LIVES TO ESCAPE FROM VIETNAM, THERE SHOULD BE NO SERIOUS SECURITY CONCERN IN ACCEPTING THEM. I ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT I HOPED THE OPENING OF THE BOAT CASES REPROCESSING CENTER MEANT THE GROC WAS PREPARED TO RESETTLE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES. THE PREMIER WAS NONCOMMITTAL, SAYING ONLY THAT HE ENVISAGED THIS CENTER AS CONCENTRATING ON "EMERGENCY CASES." I THEN REINTERATED THAT TE URGENT NEED WAS FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT.

5. COMMENT: THE PREMIER WAS PROBABLY OUTLINING THE MORE DETAILED RESPONSE I WOULD EXPECT TO RECEIVE SOON FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HOW SUBSTANTIAL THESE ROC DECISIONS MAY TURN OUT TO BE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO JUDGE ON THE BASIS OF THE PREMIER'S SUMMARY. WHAT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE GROC IS FULLY AWARE OF OUR CONCERN AND HAS DECIDED IT MUST AT LEAST APPEAR RESPONSIVE.

UNGER

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